



Extension

Approved 9/18/2024

University of Illinois Extension Council Minutes

Unit 24 – May 16, 2024 – 6:00pm – Harrisburg Extension Office

Welcome: The Unit 24 Extension Council meeting on May 16, 2024, was called to order at 6:13pm by Chair Stacy Phillips.

Council Members Present: Connie Gibbs, Stacy Phillips, Norman Hill, Justin Roberts, Alex Watkins, Jamie Byrd, Richard Nole, and Rachel Lands.

Staff Present: Angie Messmer, Sheila Stamer, and Lindsay Adams.

Approval of Minutes from February 15, 2024: The minutes from the February 15, 2024, meeting was reviewed by those present. A motion to approve the minutes as read was made by Alex Watkins and seconded by Connie Gibbs. The motion carried.

Fiscal Reports – 3rd Quarters for FY24: The Fiscal Report was provided to those present consisting of the Banking Summary – Q1 2024 and FY24 – March 2024 Reconciliation Summary. Sheila Stamer stated our balance looks good as of the end of the third quarter, however, there are some outstanding expenses that have not been posted in the Banner system she reconciles from. Once all of the FY24 expenses have been posted, the ending balance will be lower, but she feels like we are in good shape. She stated that she and Angie are working on the FY25 budget, and the expenses will show an increase due to the rising costs of program supplies, rental fees, and other line items. Richard Nole asked if we had any money invested. Angie Messmer said no because some funds/line items cannot draw interest and some funds must only be used for certain purposes. Norman Hill asked if the money was local or from the university. Angie said that it was local and from County Boards through tax levies. If there are no levies, there will not be state or federal funding. Sheila stated that the county board match for FY24 was at 75% and that is the proposed match again for FY25. A motion to approve the Fiscal Reports was made by Richard Nole and seconded by Justin Roberts. The motion carried.

Updates from County Director:

- Abbey Reeves was hired as the new Pope-Hardin 4-H Extension Program Coordinator on March 18, 2024. She was involved with eclipse programing and Stewardship Week. She is from Carrier Mills.
- Amanda Brumley was hired on March 18, 2024, as the 60% housekeeper at the Dixon Springs Agricultural Center.
- The Gallatin County Extension Office is now open. Lindsay Adams and Kassy Scates are both based out of that office. The office is in the Farm Bureau office building in Ridgway.

- The Gallatin County Board has voted to give \$1 to Gallatin County Extension on the grounds that they say they have given enough money to Extension but are not getting a good return on their investment and that Extension is not doing enough with the money. Angie said that she does not want to take money from the other counties in the unit to fund Gallatin. Angie asked those present at our meeting their thoughts on what she should do with the clubs, office, and staff. Gallatin county will still be collecting funds, but the money will be stuck in the account because the Board is only giving Extension \$1. If they use the money for anything else, it would be considered illegal. Angie said that she has the authority to pull the programming out of Gallatin County and the 4-Hers can join clubs in other counties. Angie told those present that people follow her around in Walmart, take pictures of staff through their office windows, and interrupt programming. She also said that what Extension does in Gallatin County is not just 4-H; they have the mobile food pantry in New Haven, SNAP Ed in the schools, the Ridgway Community Garden, etc. Angie said that if Extension must pull out of Gallatin County, then Kassy Scates would be the only one to lose her job because the other staff would go to other counties in the unit. Alex Watkins said that he thought we should keep the programs going until the November vote and Stacy and Justin agreed. Richard Nole said that this needs to be a grassroots movement and that if Extension pulls out sooner than November that its over, and Justin agreed. Stacy and Alex both advised that kids should be involved because nothing conveys the meaningfulness of a message than people seeing faces, they know. Alex asked if the group thought if getting news coverage would be a positive or negative thing. Justin recommended that Extension use the campus marketing person to get more publicity. Richard and Alex said that losing Extension in Gallatin County would set a bad precedent throughout the state. A motion was made by Norman Hill that the Board recommends continuing our [the University of Illinois Extension's] presence in Gallatin County until after the election. Alex Watkins seconded it, and all were in favor, so the motion carried.

Updates from Educators:

- **Bronwyn Aly:** Angie Messmer gave Bronwyn Aly's report due to her absence. The Southern Illinois Summer Twilight Series has kicked off with the first farm visit being to Legacy Meats LLC on May 13, 2024. The other three locations on the schedule are McLane Farms on June 17, Blessed Blooms on July 15, and Sunnybrook Gardens on August 19. This series highlights small farms around the area and meets on location from 6-8pm. There is usually one meeting at the Dixon Springs Agricultural Center, but that date has yet to be announced. There is no cost to attend but registration is required. Bronwyn's report also included the Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News, of which she is an editor. This packet discussed upcoming programs, listings for beginning and established growers, news, announcements, information on the Illinois Summer Horticulture Field Day set for June 6, 2024, Regional reports from the St. Louis Metro East, Southwestern Illinois, and Dixon Springs, management recommendations for periodical cicadas, a cover crop update, weed management strategies for vegetable farms, suggested spray schedule for peach trees without fruit, an article about how a mild winter has put plants in a precarious place, an article about farmer fashion, and a listing of the University of Illinois Extension educators and specialists along with their phone numbers and email addresses.

- **Lizz Cooley-Questelle:** Lizz's report discussed Tri-State Food Bank's Food on the Move Hardin County pop-up distribution, the recognition of Lacey Barnhill and Lizz Cooley-Questelle at the annual Illinois Nutrition Education Programs conference for their excellence in nutrition education programming over the

past year, SNAP Ed's role in promoting breakfast at East Side Intermediate School in Harrisburg, the final visit of Andi (a part of the OrganWise Guys) and Community Outreach Worker Terra Russell for the school year at Eldorado Elementary School and Wells Elementary School in White County, the Eat. Move. Save. Booths in Gallatin County, the registration for this year's School Lunch Rocks School Food Service Training workshops, and the prepping and planting of the Golden Circle's Hoe Down Garden in Ridgway.

- **John Shadowens:** John's report discussed the R3 funding for positive youth development in Harrisburg and the conclusion of the HEAT Project. John is transferring out of Unit 24 to lead a new CED team. Angie Messmer will take over facilitating the group of community members who are involved in mapping existing support and opportunities and growing new ideas for youth to engage with their community that is a part of the R3 initiative.

- **Lindsay Adams:** Lindsay discussed the Unit 24 4-H Youth Development Team Report Highlights. Abbey Reeves has been appointed as the new Pope/Hardin EPC. She is very enthusiastic. Lindsay also said that Unit 24 has a total of 5 EPC's. The Eclipse Programing was a success and reached over 2,000 youth. The Oak Tree Savannahs Program was completed in Gallatin and Hamilton Counties where youth planted 25 oak trees. This program was offered through the State 4-H partnered with Soil and Water Conservation. Hardin County High School students completed the "Welcome to the Real World" program which equipped youth with essential life skills and knowledge to navigate the challenges of adulthood. Youth were given monthly salaries, had to pay taxes, take out student loans, learn about banking, purchase a vehicle, pay bills, write checks, and much more. Lindsay said that this was the first time she had offered this program to such a large group. She also had the idea to do the program with Freshman students and have it located at Southeastern Illinois College and have other businesses take part while allowing those students to also learn about SIC. Unit 24 4-H and HCE donated 100 lap blankets to the Veterans Honor Flights on May 7th, 2024. Hamilton County 4-H had a "cabin fever day" and the HCE ladies taught the 4-Her's how to sew. They would like to do this again next year. This was the 35th anniversary of the annual Stewardship Week Event at the Dixon Springs Agricultural Center. A total of 1,125 K-6th graders attended this event over the course of three days. Lindsay made note that the attendance numbers are getting closer to what they were before COVID. Students from 17 different schools took part in this event. Lindsay said that Gallatin County schools do not attend this event anymore. Those present inferred that some schools did not attend because of staff turnover and lack of passing on the information. More schools are expected to participate in the future as word continues to spread. This year there were 35 educational stations with more information about the stations listed in a packet provided by Lindsay. This packet also contained more information about the program, totals of students in attendance over the years, and a list of the agencies and individuals who volunteered their time to have stations at Stewardship Week this year. The County Fairs happen in June and July. It was also discussed that 4-Her's now can show their projects at the Du Quoin State Fair (in addition to the Springfield State Fair) only those exhibitions will not count towards the 4-Her's premiums. This is the first year for this showing opportunity. General Show projects are to be shown on August 17 and the livestock shows are August 23 and 24th, 2024. Pope, Hamilton, and Gallatin Counties will be hosting summer cooking classes. Pope, Hamilton, and White Counties will be hosting youth gardening classes. Kids do not have to be in 4-H to participate. Hamilton County takes the produce they harvest to the local farmer's market. Connie Gibbs asked if the Rides Buses could take kids from the housing districts to programs, and Lindsay said yes.

Civil Rights Discussion: Extension had its annual Civil Rights Review in October. The data from Unit 24's programs was reviewed, all goals were met, and it was approved. We were able to show increased diversity. A new 4-H club started in Carrier Mills, and there are two new SPIN clubs in Gallatin County.

Council Replacements: The following council members will need to be replaced beginning September 1, 2024, Stacy Phillips from White County, Jennifer Willis from Hamilton County, and Alex Watkins from Saline County. Stacy Phillips said she would talk to Joe Zieren about replacing her. Alex Watkins said that he has been in contact with Hannah Haney about replacing him and he could ask Travis Beasley as well. Alex asked approximately when the Extension Council meetings were throughout the year. They are usually in August, October, February, and May. Angie said that she prefers to have the council composed of a diverse group of members. The replacement list is due to the Regional Director by June 15, 2024.

Next Scheduled Meeting: The next meeting of the Unit 24 Extension Council will tentatively be on August 29, 2024, at 6:00pm at the Saline County Extension Office. We will have our annual dinner and those in attendance are allowed to bring guests.

Comments and Discussion:

- Angie said that she would be glad to sit down and discuss the issue in Gallatin County with any of our members.
- Alex Watkins asked if Angie had thought about putting together an informal committee for the Grass Roots movement and Angie said yes. He would like to be involved and suggested an investment breakfast. School board members could be invited and other members in the community that would be valuable to have at the stakeholder's type meeting.
- Alex also mentioned that it would be somewhat easy to get an SIH grant for the nutrition part of Extension, but it would have to be for a nonprofit.
- Norman asked how many members responded to this meeting. Sheila stated that we have 15 members, 2 did not respond to her emails and 2 had something else come up.

Adjourn: A motion to adjourn this meeting was made by Alex Watkins and seconded by Justin Roberts. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 7:03pm. This was because Justin Roberts had to leave causing there to not be a quorum. The meeting was adjourned during Lindsay Adams' report and then discussion continued on the rest of the business.

Minutes Taken and Submitted By:

Rachel Lands